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Anchorage, AK 99507  
3 August 2004

NE NPR-A Amendment Planning Team  
Bureau of Land Management (930), Alaska State Office  
222 West 7th Ave.  
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599

Re: Do not reduce protection for essential wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake

Dear Sir,

Please adopt Alternative A—the "No Action" Alternative—which retains current protections for critical fish and wildlife habitats in the Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area.

Do not cut the Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area by 75 percent and the size of the no-lease zone by more than half—down to a mere 213,000 acres. Biologists and wildlife professionals have made clear that there is no scientific justification for this change, and the small protected area would be grossly inadequate in terms of fish and wildlife protection around Teshekpuk Lake.

1. During July and August, up to 37,000 brant—30 percent of all Pacific brant—molt in the area north and east of Teshekpuk Lake.
2. Large numbers of greater white-fronted geese molting at the lake are increasing and range as high as 35,000 individuals, about 6 percent of the mid-continental population, and
3. thousands of Canada and snow geese gather to molt in this unique wetland complex.
4. This area is home to the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd of 45,000 animals.
5. This caribou herd is very important in terms of subsistence harvests by Alaska Natives living on the North Slope.

For caribou and geese, the time spent near Teshekpuk Lake is highly sensitive. The geese are flightless during their energy-demanding molt and extremely vulnerable to disturbance by people and aircraft. Calving caribou are also easily disturbed, and needless expenditures of energy reduce feeding time and reproductive success. This area is remote, relatively free of predators, and has high quality forage for geese and caribou.

This vast wetland complex, especially to the north and east, is unique and among the most important in the entire circumpolar Arctic.

Three Secretaries of the Interior, serving three different Presidents, have recognized the need for special protection of the area around Teshekpuk Lake.

Your amended oil and gas leasing plan for the northeastern National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska would significantly reduce protection for essential wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake. Adopt Alternative A—the "No Action" Alternative.

Sincerely yours,

*Mary Ann McCall*  
Mary Ann McCall

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Alternatives003  
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Caribou

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